

OUR ROCK OF AGES NEVER CHANGES

[1 Samuel 7:12](#) “Then Samuel took a stone, and set it between Mizpeh and Shen, and called the name of it Ebenezer, saying, Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”



In eternity there will be no clocks, or calendars, or new years, because there will be no time to measure. How important then are the few years allotted us on this earth! Now is the seedtime for eternity, now is the time to prepare for our everlasting destiny. Think of the solemnity of death, the gateway and door to timeless and endless duration.

Since we are not yet in eternity we continue to count every second, minute, hour, day, month, and year. Today as we put up a new calendar, we have an opportune time to pause and examine ourselves as did Samuel in our text. The Lord had helped him and his people out of great trouble and he set up a memorial stone and called the name of it “Ebenezer¹¹ which means “stone of help.” We are going to follow the example of Samuel and make his stone our stone or rock.

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1. HE, HAS BEEN OUR ROCK IN THE PAST

When we examine the history of God’s people in the Old Testament we often wonder how they survived. Abraham was almost alone in the world, a pilgrim, as were his children Isaac and Jacob. Look at the precarious life of Joseph with its sunshine and shadows. All the Jews were slaves in Egypt for many years, yet by the grace of God they managed to survive. After that they existed for 40 years of wanderings in the wilderness, with no crops to support them. Entering the Holy Land they found it well fortified and seemingly impregnable.

Even after conquering the land they were still surrounded by enemies and at the same time were plagued with many internal problems and troubles throughout the years. Truly the past often looked very dark and hopeless.

No matter how black the past was for His people, God always came to them with His comfort and help. He promised them a Savior from sin and in Him they could always find comfort and forgiveness. Yes, the Jews of old could say with Samuel, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

All of us have experienced good days and bad days. We have had family sicknesses, church troubles, world turmoil, and many other sorrows and crosses too numerous to mention. This world is full of evil. And no one can go through life without some tribulations and afflictions. Job, who ought to know, said ([Job 5:7](#)), "Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." St. Paul from experience could say ([Acts 14:22](#)), "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."

When did the Lord really forsake us in the past? When did He ever turn His face away from us? When did He ever deny us the forgiveness of our sins in Christ? Looking backwards, our whole life is a record of the faithfulness of our Father who is in heaven. "Call upon me in the day of trouble and I will deliver thee," is a promise which the Lord has never broken.

2. HE IS OUR ROCK NOW

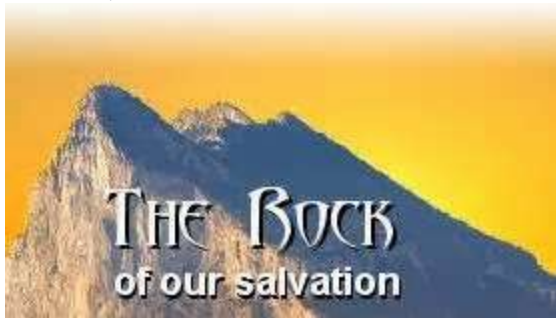
Twenty years before the events in our text the Philistines had won a victory over the Jews and it looked, for a time at least, as though the Lord were on the side of the enemies and had forsaken His people. But such was not the case 'for at the time of our text the Israelites had just defeated the old enemy and were able to keep the land. This present victory over the Philistines aroused Samuel to such gratitude to the Lord that he took a large stone and called it "stone of help," The stone was for all people to see and was to remain for a long, long time as a memorial to the faithfulness of the Lord. There were no human names inscribed on the stone, no list of heroes who died defending their country. With mute eloquence the stone declared "all glory to God."

Did we gather here today in this church to tell the Lord how we guarded and protected ourselves until this present moment? Are we coming before the Lord as did the Pharisee, proud of our own achievements and deeds, and boasting with him, "I fast, I give tithes, I am not as other people"? Surely that cannot be our attitude on this New Years Day.

Today, as Samuel, we set up a stone, an invisible monument to commemorate the everlasting mercy and faithfulness of the Holy Trinity, who never did leave us nor forsake us. He has always forgiven our sins through faith in Jesus and has taken us into His arms for protection and help. Even now God is with us and near us, strengthening our weak faith to believe in His faithfulness. We cannot live without Him and our prayer will always be, "Abide with me" and "I need Thy presence every passing hour."

3. HE IS OUR ROCK FOREVER

Samuel set up this “stone of help” in the midst of his people as a memorial to the past faithfulness of the “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” But he certainly had also this thought in mind that the stone should be a reminder that the Lord would always be their help in the future. If “hitherto” is correct, then “always” is also correct. No matter what dark future lay before them as individuals or as a nation, they should never forget “Ebenezer.” The stone should remind future generations that our Rock of Ages never changes. How can we know what the future has in store for *us*? Would we really want to know? Who knows how many more years we have to live on this earth? It matters very little, for He will be “with us always even unto the end of the world.” Our new year and future we place into the hands of our Savior, and we are safe and secure.



Our final future is and must be eternity. What about it? Where will we spend eternity? We are assured again and again by the sacred Scriptures that if we put our trust and confidence in the “Rock of ages, cleft for me” we shall be washed pure and white in His blood and shall live and reign with Him forever and ever in heaven. The theme of our eternal song will still be—EBENEZER: “hitherto hath the Lord helped us.” When we are “before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in our hands” we shall more fully understand how OUR ROCK OF AGES NEVER CHANGES. AMEN. PRAYER. O faithful God, when we look back upon our past life and the past years, we hang our heads in shame and remorse over our many and grievous sins. Look upon them no more for Jesus’ sake, O gracious Father in heaven. But towering above all our frailties we see Thy faithfulness and goodness like a mighty rock and fortress. With Thee by our side we fear no evil. Forsake us never, that we might see Thee face to face and praise Thee forever and ever, Thou great and changeless Rock of our help. AMEN.